

April 27, 2017

Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
601 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Prince Khalid bin Salman,

From ISIS, to al Qaeda affiliates, to Iran, our two countries confront common threats. For that reason, we were pleased that Saudi Arabia hosted Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis last week for a successful visit that reiterated the important security relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia. Following Secretary Mattis' visit, we write to request that your government take specific steps to ameliorate the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

As you may have seen, Secretary Mattis noted last week "the number of innocent people dying inside Yemen" and as Ambassador Abdullah Al-Saud wrote in his op-ed last week, the war in Yemen "has cost thousands of lives while generating political and economic chaos." In fact, according to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), more than seventeen million people in Yemen—approximately 60% of the country's population—are food insecure, including roughly seven million people who are unable to survive without food assistance. Much of this suffering is directly attributable to the ongoing war in Yemen.

While we believe the international community—including Saudi Arabia and the United States—has a moral imperative to help Yemenis at risk of starvation, we also believe it is in our strategic interests to do so. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has exploited the conflict in Yemen to threaten the United States and our allies, and Iran has exploited the conflict to undermine our interests. In order to isolate and eliminate these threats in Yemen, we must bring the civil war to an end, and the only way to accomplish that is through a political settlement. Yet, the worsening humanitarian crisis is fueling instability and making a political settlement more difficult. That is why it is in our interests to address the humanitarian crisis while working toward a political settlement.

While the challenges in Yemen and the severity of the humanitarian crisis are daunting, working with the United States and other regional partners, there are specific steps that your government can take in order to alleviate some of the suffering of the Yemeni people. We respectfully request that your government:

1. **Lend full support to Secretary Mattis' call for a political settlement in Yemen.** As you know, during his trip to Saudi Arabia, Secretary Mattis called for international negotiations and a political resolution to bring the conflict to an end. We support Secretary Mattis' call for negotiations that would culminate in a political settlement in Yemen. This will require flexibility and significant concessions from all sides. With a

full appreciation for the associated challenges, including Iran's malign activities in Yemen, we ask that your government utilize its position as a regional leader to bring this conflict to an end.

2. **Refrain from bombing the port of Hodeidah and call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire around the port.** As you know, a large majority of food, fuel, and medical supplies that enter Yemen enter through the Red Sea port of Hodeidah. A military operation that resulted in the closure of the Hodeidah port would dramatically exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and would likely result in a famine within a few months. If the port is closed, parts of Hodeidah, Taiz, Sa'ada, and Hajjah governorates would likely experience famine within three months of the port's closure, and possibly within 1-2 months. In short, a military campaign against Hodeidah would make a horrible humanitarian situation in Yemen catastrophic. Demonstrating the need for an end to the conflict, even the fear of a pending military campaign against Hodeidah has resulted in some commercial shippers ending service to Hodeidah. An immediate humanitarian ceasefire around Hodeidah would be a key enabling factor allowing a response to this crisis.
3. **Reform the inspection regime at the port of Hodeidah to eliminate unnecessary delays in the delivery of severely needed humanitarian and commercial supplies.** Admittedly, many of the challenges related to the delivery of humanitarian aid relate to challenges on the ground (e.g. Houthi checkpoints and ongoing fighting). However, since 2015, the Saudi-led coalition has imposed an inspection, interdiction, and licensing regime that at times has amounted to a de facto blockade of Yemen's red sea ports, including Hodeidah. Even after the United Nations established a Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) to strengthen interdiction, your government has reportedly maintained the regime. As a result, commercial and humanitarian shipments experience months-long delays, resulting in spoilage of cool cargo items such as food and medication that require constant refrigeration. The World Food Programme (WFP) reports that three to four months are needed for importation clearances before its ships are allowed to berth. We support efforts to prevent Iranian weapons from being shipped to Yemen, but that objective can be achieved without delaying humanitarian shipments for weeks or months.
4. **Facilitate the delivery of cranes to the port of Hodeidah to increase humanitarian aid and commercial capacity.** The destruction of some infrastructure at the port of Hodeidah has severely impaired offloading capacity. With financial support from the American taxpayers, the WFP has supplied four cranes for installation at Hodeidah port to compensate for the lost capacity. It is our understanding that the Saudi-led coalition may have denied WFP permission to install the cranes. As a result, we understand that these cranes are sitting idle elsewhere. We ask for your government's support in facilitating the delivery of these cranes to Hodeidah without delay.

5. **Redouble efforts to ensure airstrikes do not hit key economic facilities and civilian infrastructure.** While we fully respect Saudi Arabia's right to defend itself and to target terrorist groups in Yemen, it is important to ensure that schools, hospitals, key civilian infrastructure, and buildings that serve an exclusively civilian purpose are not targeted. Many of these sites are apparently on no-strike lists provided by the United Nations and the United States, and it is essential that your government take further steps to ensure they are not attacked.

Ambassador Abdullah Al-Saud concluded his op-ed last week by highlighting the importance of the relationship between our two countries and emphasizing the importance of close collaboration. We agree, and in that spirit, we respectfully ask you to take these steps in partnership with the United States and other humanitarian donors without delay in order to prevent millions of innocent Yemenis from starving to death. We have both a moral and strategic imperative to do nothing less.

Thank you for considering these requests.

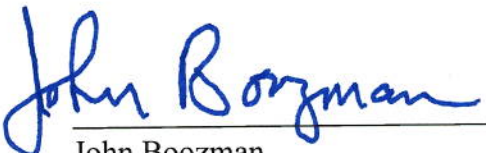
Sincerely,



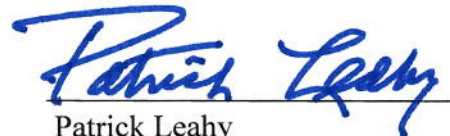
Todd Young
U.S. Senator



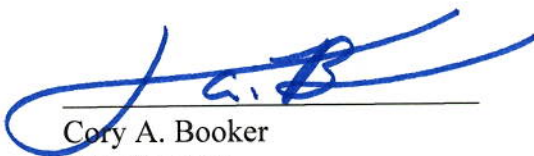
Christopher S. Murphy
U.S. Senator



John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senator



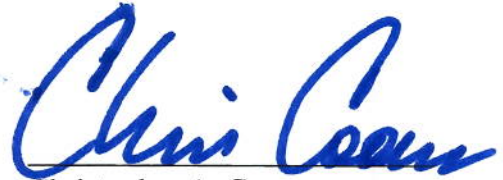
Cory A. Booker
U.S. Senator



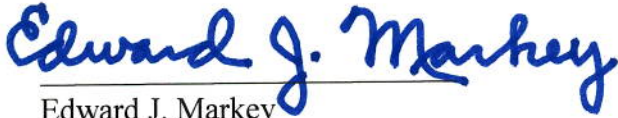
Jeffrey A. Merkley
U.S. Senator

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Richard J. Durbin
U.S. Senator

Handwritten signature of Chris Coons in blue ink.

Christopher A. Coons
U.S. Senator

Handwritten signature of Edward J. Markey in blue ink.

Edward J. Markey
U.S. Senator